

Whickham School



Anti-Bullying Policy



Anti-bullying policy

The governors and staff of Whickham School & Sports College understand that for all our students and staff to truly flourish they need to learn and work in a safe, caring and supportive environment. To this end bullying of any kind will not be tolerated – this includes any kind of intimidation, emotional, verbal, sexual harassment or physical abuse. The policy applies to all pupils irrespective of gender, ethnic origin or religious persuasion.

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- Repeated
- Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- Often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Bullying takes many forms and can include:

- Physical assault
- Teasing
- Making threats
- Name calling
- Cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)

Bullying does not mean “falling out” with friends or a one-off episode (which the school will support pupils to resolve through restorative approaches); it is repetitive and habitual

The Anti - Bullying policy applies to all pupils and staff who work at our school and may extend beyond the school site; this includes school trips, the journey to and from school for pupils and the use of social media networks. The policy therefore applies at all times when staff ‘duty of care’ responsibilities apply.

The governors wish all parents and guardians to know that they expect the school to have a caring and supportive atmosphere in which pupils can feel happy and secure and able to work to the best of their ability.

Bullying will not be tolerated – but we rely on being made aware of incidents – we cannot help if we do not know. If we are aware of bullying we will act.

Central to the definition of bullying is the motivation of the perpetrator(s), which will primarily be to exert power over another in order to cause distress. They can only operate behind a wall of fear and therefore can easily escape detection if bullying incidents are not reported. Therefore, we must create a 'telling' school, arising out of a listening and safe environment. We have a number of processes in school for reporting things to us as staff; Classcharts well being app, safeguarding mentors in every year group, non teaching heads of year and a robust safeguarding team.

Intrinsic to all this, is educating our pupils about bullying. Young people often say 'It was just a joke', not knowing or realising the impact that their behaviour has on another pupil. It is essential that we provide an environment where students feel safe to "tell" if they are aware of bullying. Should any bullying be taking place then pupils are always encouraged to tell an appropriate person at school. This could be their form tutor, a Safeguarding Mentor, the Pastoral Leader, Mr McCaughey the Anti-bullying lead, or any other adult in school. It may be a member of staff with whom the pupil feels particularly at ease.

The Pastoral Leader for the year group must be informed and an investigation conducted into the alleged incident. Incidents of bullying witnessed by staff should be dealt with immediately and the incident reported to the relevant Pastoral Leader for the year group. If the bullying has a racist, homophobic or hate crime nature the school will follow Local Authority guidelines and Hate Crime Incident reporting forms will be completed and submitted to the Local Authority. Pastoral Leaders are responsible for ensuring that incidents of bullying and actions taken are correctly recorded onto our safeguarding system CPOMS

Pupils will be provided with opportunities at a variety of levels to remind them that bullying is unacceptable. These include taught RE lessons, tutor activities, Citizenship lessons assemblies and pupil-led events related to bullying issues. However, all staff and all curriculum areas have a responsibility to challenge bullying in all its possible forms. The school has student Safeguarding Mentors and a Safeguarding Team who use Restorative Approaches to help deal with bullying, ensuring that the perpetrator recognises their behaviour and works hard to change it.

The Headteacher and Pastoral Leaders will make clear the school's stance on bullying to all parents of in-coming pupils at the parents evenings. He will therefore seek the support of parents and carers during the year prior to transition. All new pupils will be informed of the anti-bullying policy at the start of the school year through assemblies and Citizenship programmes as well as during National Anti-Bullying Week.

Parents/carers are encouraged to report bullying and in the first instance should do this via the Pastoral Leader for the year group. Parents/carers of pupils who join the school during the school year will be informed of the school's stance on bullying by the Headteacher/Pastoral Leaders when students and parents/carers are met prior to pupil admission.

All staff are briefed on the school's guidelines on bullying as part of the school's anti-bullying policy. These guidelines are explained to new staff as part of induction and re-enforced by Assistant Headteacher Behaviour and Attitudes at regular pastoral team meetings. Non-teaching staff are also briefed on the guidelines on bullying and will be aware of the school's stance on bullying by the Assistant Headteacher Behaviour and Attitudes.

All members of our community are given equal opportunities in line with the Disability Equality Scheme (DES).

Students at Whickham School & Sports College are entitled to expect:

- That they should be able to learn and work in a caring, supportive environment, where there is academic challenge but where bullying is not tolerated.
- That there is a wide range of support available to them if they become victims of bullying. This may include Safeguarding Mentors, restorative justice meetings, signed behaviour agreements and counselling. All incidents of bullying are unique and must be dealt with as such.
- That their views will be listened to as a way forward when there has been an incident of bullying
- That when bullying has taken place and the situation has been resolved there will be no recurrence
- That they will know what action is to be taken and, if appropriate, that their parents may be informed

Whickham School & Sports College and the Governing Body expect that:

- All members of our community are alert for the signs of bullying;
- The issue of bullying will be discussed openly and regularly
- Close links will be developed and strengthened with our external agencies which might help reduce bullying behaviour
- Members of our community are committed to taking effective and appropriate action in dealing with bullying
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place to support victims and investigate incidents
- Appropriate counselling, training and support systems are in place to re-educate the perpetrators

Parents of our Pupils are entitled to expect that:

- Their children will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring
- The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying occurring
- Any bullying incident which is reported will be investigated and dealt with according to our Behaviour Policy

Guidance for Students

We expect all of our students to

- Show respect to others at all times and be aware of the pain that some words or actions can have on others
- Talk to an adult in school or Safeguarding Mentor if they are being bullied or know someone who is.
- Use the Class charts wellbeing app if they feel they cannot speak to staff directly

Guidance for Parents

If you think your child is being bullied:

- Please contact the school immediately and speak to the relevant Pastoral Leader
- Ask your child directly if they are being bullied
- Take bullying seriously
- Please do not agree to keep bullying secret

If we know – we can help

Approved by:	Mrs S Maher
Last reviewed on:	July 2021
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